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THE
ROMISH DOCTRINE
OF THE
Rule of Faith Examined.

A LECTURE

*Delivered at the Close of the Session of the
Presbyterian College, Montreal,*

On the 4th April, 1872,

BY REV. WILLIAM MACLAREN,
Knox Church, Ottawa.

With an Appendix,

*In which certain Statements of REV. FATHER DAMEN, and
REV. DR. O'CONNOR, are considered.*

OTTAWA:
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1872

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DANIEL CAREY,
Barrister, Attorney,
Solicitor & Notary Public,
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

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PREFACE.

For the sake of readers at a distance, it may be proper to make a prefatory statement in reference to the following Lecture. During the past season, more than ordinary attention has, in this City, been directed to the Romish controversy. In the early part of the Winter an eloquent Jesuit Missionary, Rev. Father DAMEN, visited Ottawa, and assailed Protestantism in a course of Public Lectures, bearing in a very marked degree the characteristics of the Order to which he belongs. These Lectures were immediately published, and have done good service in arousing public attention to the system which they were intended to promote. Able discourses were preached and published by several Protestant Ministers of the City, animadverting upon these assaults on the truth. To one of these Sermons, viz. that preached by Rev. WM. STEPHENSON, a lengthened and elaborate "Reply" from the pen of Rev. JOHN L. O'CONNOR, D. D., a resident Priest, made its appearance. Shortly after this second champion of Romanism had entered the lists, the writer was invited to address a Public Meeting, on behalf of the French Canadian Missionary Society. Having taken no previous part in the discussion, he deemed the occasion suitable to examine the Romish Doctrine of the Rule of Faith, which both these defenders of Romanism had earnestly urged upon public attention. It seemed to him reasonable that Protestants, before they burn the boat in which they have so long sailed, should see that there are no rotten planks in the craft in which they are urged to embark.

The address was received with much favour by the large audience who listened to it, and its publication was repeatedly

urged upon the speaker. With these requests, it was not possible to comply, inasmuch as the address was delivered from imperfect notes and had not been fully reported.

The speaker, however, agreed to take the same subject as the theme of a Lecture which he had been invited to deliver at the close of the Session of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, and to reproduce as far as suitable for that occasion, the general train of the argument, and then to give it to the public through the Press.

Such is the origin of the following Lecture. Its history may account for its assuming a less academic and more popular form than it might otherwise have taken. The writer, however, is not aware that he has, in any instance, sacrificed accuracy of statement, or correctness of argument to popular effect. He is satisfied that enough will be found, within the small compass of this Lecture, to show how baseless are the pretensions put forth on behalf of Romanism and its vaunted Rule of Faith.

In the Appendix certain additional points are referred to, which the limits of a single Lecture did not enable him to overtake.

Ottawa, 8th April, 1872.

LECTURE

ON THE

ROMISH DOCTRINE OF THE RULE OF FAITH.

THERE is no point on which Romanists and Protestants differ more widely than on the Rule of Faith. On a question so vital, truth cannot be unimportant, nor error fail to be pernicious. The Scriptures teach, and all Christians hold, that faith is indispensable to salvation. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life."

Romanists assert that without divine faith salvation is impossible, and that divine faith can only be attained where their Rule of Faith is embraced. A Jesuit Missionary recently stated, in Ottawa, and Romish divines generally agree with him, that divine faith is, "To believe all that God has taught on the authority of God, and to believe without doubting, without hesitating."

We do not admit the correctness of this definition. It errs by defect, and by excess. It includes too little and too much. (1.) *It errs by defect.* It leaves out the essential element of personal trust in Christ, by which "we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel." The faith which saves is not the mere intellectual reception of certain propositions on any authority whatever. In this, there is nothing which devils do not exhibit, when they "believe and tremble." Their creed is most orthodox, and their faith is based on the authority of God. But while they believe they hate and disobey. (2.) *It errs by excess.* It requires as essential to salvation, what many, recognised by Christ Himself as His true disciples, did not possess. He that fails to believe all that God has taught, and to believe without doubt or hesitation, we are assured, perishes everlastingly. No distinction is made between the more and less weighty matters of the law, between more

* John iii. 36.

† Father Damen's Lectures, page 1.

and less vital truth. He who errs as to the number of sheep which Noah had in the ark, or the religious significance of kissing the Pope's great toe, endangers his salvation, as much as if he rejected the Trinity, denied the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ, and held that murder, lying and adultery are cardinal virtues.

We find Christ repeatedly rebuking His disciples for their doubts and unbelief. Did the Apostle Thomas never doubt or hesitate? And what shall we say of errors into which the whole twelve fell? Was there not a strife among them "which of them should be accounted the greatest,"* and that too after Christ had said "thou art Peter and on this Rock will I build my Church." These disciples evidently did not hold the primacy of Peter, when they regarded it as an open question which of them should be the greatest. They certainly did not believe, what Romanists regard as one of the most important truths, which Christ has taught. Did they then believe *all* that God has taught,—“without doubting, without hesitating”?

A definition which errs so much by defect and by excess, and which would exclude from salvation all the Apostles of Christ, cannot be accepted. Romanists, however, insist, in almost every conceivable form, upon the possession of the faith thus defined, as essential to salvation. It is because it is assumed that Protestants cannot attain to this absolute certainty and undoubting faith in all that God has taught, that their Rule of Faith is pronounced worthless, and a better one must be discovered.

And as nothing can be fairer than to try a doctrine by the tests which its chosen champions apply to an opposing system, we purpose in this Lecture, examining, by this touchstone, the pretensions put forth on behalf of the Romish doctrine of the Rule of Faith.

The Rule of Faith, according to Romanists, consists of the Scriptures and Tradition as interpreted by the Church; or, as Dr. Milner expresses it, “The whole Word of God Written and Unwritten; in other words, Scripture and Tradition, and these

* Luke xxii. 24.

propounded and explained by the Catholic Church.”* To the Old Testament also, Romanists add the books, usually known as the Apocrypha, books which were never admitted by the Jews into their Canon, and which were never recognized by Christ or His Apostles, and have been steadily rejected by the majority of Christians down to the present day. Tradition, it should be added, is now found scattered through all the writings of the Fathers and the acts and sayings of the Saints and a vast amount of religious literature, to say nothing of what has floated down in oral channels from generation to generation. The Protestant Rule of Faith, in its divine simplicity, stands forth in striking contrast to the cumbersome and inaccessible Rule which Romanists hold.† It consists in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. “The Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants.” We regard the Scriptures as a Rule of Faith because they are given by inspiration, and their teachings are characterized by infallible truth and divine authority. We hold that the Bible alone is the Rule of Faith, because the world now possesses no other teachings, or writings which are infallible and divine. When Christ and His Apostles were on earth, the Church was not dependent on a book for unerring guidance, but since our Lord’s ascension, and the removal by death of the last of His Apostles, we have no other source of infallible wisdom to which we can resort, than the Sacred Volume, where we find the lessons which Christ and His inspired servants deemed necessary for the Church in succeeding ages.

We reject Tradition as an element in the Rule of Faith, because Christ has discountenanced it,‡ and because it is always uncertain, and often contradictory, silly and absurd, and, moreover, because we have no means by which we

* End of Controv. Page 125.

† “The Protestant Rule is the Scripture. To the Scripture the Roman Catholic adds (1) the Apocrypha; (2) Traditions; (3) Acts and decisions of the Church, embracing eight folio Volumes of the Pope’s Bulls; ten folio Volumes of Decretals; thirty-one folio Volumes of Acts of Councils; fifty-one folio Volumes of Acta Sanctorum or the doings and sayings of the Saints; (4) Add to these at least thirty-five Volumes of the Greek and Latin Fathers, in which he says is to be found, the *unanimous consent* of the Fathers; (5) To all these one hundred and thirty-five Volumes folio, add the chaos of *unwritten traditions* which have floated to us down from the Apostolic times.”—Elliott’s *Della. of Romanism*. Page 13.

‡ Matt. xv. 1-9.

can separate the atoms of truth which may float in the stream from the old wives' fables with which they are hopelessly intermingled. Did Protestants believe that God had constituted the Church a living infallible teacher, they would, at once, submit cheerfully to all its ascertained teachings. Its utterances would come to them with all the weight of divine revelations, and would partake of the nature of Holy Scripture. We would regard its voice as do Romanists as "the proximate and sufficient ground of faith for the people."

In stating the Protestant Rule of Faith, Romanists invariably misrepresent it, and in such a manner, as is peculiarly fitted to conceal one of the weak points of their own. They represent the Protestant Rule to be the Bible as interpreted by every one's private judgment.* Thoughtless persons, listening to this statement, are apt to imagine that Church interpretation holds the same relation to the Bible and Tradition, in the Romish system, that private interpretation sustains to the Bible, in the Protestant system, and consequently that Romanists escape from all the errors and uncertainties of private interpretation. There could be no greater mistake. Every Church interpretation, in the Romish system, is virtually an *addition to Scripture*, which, as much requires to be understood and interpreted by each member of the Romish Church, as does the Bible by the Protestant. All Romanists admit that Church interpretation is an element in their Rule of Faith, but no intelligent Protestant imagines that his private judgment as to the sense of Scripture is any part of his Rule of Faith. A *rule* is one thing, and the *use* made of it is another. The Bible is the Protestant's Rule of Faith. Private interpretation is the use made of it. A trader may have a measure which is perfectly correct, but the correctness of the *measuring* done, depends on the use which he makes of it.

Let us then enquire whether by the Romish Rule of Faith, a man can attain to that divine faith which "believes all that God has taught, on the authority of God, "without doubting, without hesitating."

* *Vide* Smarius' Points of Controv. page 51. Keenan's Catechism, p. 45. Dancien, p. 5.

I. We may safely lay it down as an axiom that no doctrine or system can be stronger than the *foundation* on which it rests.

It is said, that according to Hindoo Cosmogony, the earth rests on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise on a cloud. The arrangement is, at first, no doubt, very promising, but it scarcely bears examination. It might be supposed, however, that Romish divines, in constructing their doctrine of the Rule of Faith, had taken lessons from a Hindoo pundit. Private judgment, we are assured, is shifting and uncertain as a cloud-bank. Nothing which rests upon it is secure. Their grand objection to the Protestant Rule of Faith is that it makes each man's belief rest, ultimately, on his own private judgment as to what is Scripture, and what Scripture means. No man who depends on his private judgment, can, we are told, ever feel assured that he believes all that God has taught upon the authority of God, and he can never believe without doubting or hesitating. Our Romish brethren evidently dream that they can escape from all the perplexities and uncertainties of private judgment, by introducing the authority of a living infallible Church, just as the Hindoo supports his earth by his elephant, and his elephant by his tortoise.

But the question arises, how can I know that there is a living infallible Church, or, knowing that there is one, how can I discover which it is? It is evident that unless each Christian has a private revelation from heaven, he must ascertain the Church by the exercise of his natural powers, his private judgment. And if private judgment is uncertain and shifting as a cloud, the whole fabric of the Romanist's faith rests on a cloud-bank. Nothing can be more secure than the foundation on which it rests.

It will not do to appeal to the Scriptures to ascertain the Church, and then to the Church to ascertain the Scriptures. This may be Romish logic, but it is not common sense. For if the Scriptures are not known to be infallible, their testimony to the Church cannot be decisive. And if the Church is not known to be infallible, its testimony to the Scriptures is not

decisive. The very thing which requires to be proved must be assumed. The logic resolves itself into a vicious circle.

It is no doubt, the most convenient thing in the world to make an infallible Bible prove an infallible Church, and then to make an infallible Church repay the compliment by proving an infallible Bible. The misfortune is, the method is so convenient, that anything under the sun can be proved by it. Had this admirable logic been recognised in a recent famous lawsuit, how delightfully and quickly might the whole case have ended. Mr. Francis Baigent would have sworn that the plaintiff was, to his certain knowledge, the genuine Sir Roger Tichborne, and the genuine Sir Roger Tichborne would have sworn that Mr. Francis Baigent was known to him as a witness in whom the Court might place implicit confidence. And so to the entire satisfaction of the mutually complimentary witnesses, the whole case would have terminated, and a gentleman accommodated at public expense in Newgate, would now be rejoicing in the possession of one of the old baronial Halls of England.

Dr. Challoner, a leading champion of Romanism, in his work on "The unerring authority of the Catholic Church,"* seeks to escape from the charge of reasoning in a vicious circle. "When," says he, "we argue with Protestants that we could not know what is Scripture and what is not, without the *authority* of the Church; we do not mean by the *authority* of the Church, her *infallibility* (at least not as proved from Scripture) but we mean the authority which she has, as an ever *illustrious Society* recommended by antiquity, celebrity, sanctity, miracles, &c., which *authority* though it be not the proper motive of divine faith (which must be immediately grounded on *divine revelation* alone) yet it is a necessary condition and introductory to divine faith."

On this change of basis, we remark,

1. That by similar evidence the Mahometan claims to establish the Koran as a Rule of Faith. Its divinity is certified by the authority of an illustrious Society which has existed ever since the days of the prophet of Mecca, a Society which is

said to be recommended by antiquity, celebrity, sanctity, miracles, &c.

2. It is therefore evident, that before any one can reasonably accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, on the authority of the Church of Rome, he must enter into lengthened historical investigations to ascertain what measure of weight is due to the claims of antiquity, celebrity, sanctity and miracles, put forth on its behalf. This investigation becomes much more complicated and difficult from the fact that precisely similar claims are put forth on behalf of the Greek, Nestorian, Armenian, Syrian, Coptic and Abyssinian Churches, each of which declares itself to be the true Church of God, which holds the Apostolic faith and practice. It should also be noted, that while all these Churches call in question the claims of the Church of Rome, they unite with her in handing down all the books which are found in the Protestant Canon of Scripture, while they unite in rejecting the Apocryphal books which the Council of Trent foisted into the Romish Canon of Scripture. But leaving out of view, for the moment, the claims of these Churches to be what Dr. Challoner would have us believe the Romish Church alone is, let us consider what an unlearned man must accomplish before he can rationally accept the Scriptures on the testimony of the illustrious Society called the Church of Rome. He must examine and weigh all its recommendations.

He must not only ascertain the *antiquity* of the Society, but he must make sure that it has not degenerated and changed its character, and how he can do this without comparing it with the original records of Christianity, the Holy Scriptures, it is not easy to perceive.

He must enquire whether the *celebrity* of a Society which contains only a minority of professing Christians is such as to override and set aside the voice of the majority of Christians who reject the Apocrypha.

He must weigh carefully the *quality* of the *sanctity* exhibited in the actual history of the Society, and see that it meets the demands of a correct moral standard. He must ascertain the measure of confidence which should be inspired by the sanctity of an illustrious Society, which furnishes such an un-

due proportion of the population of our gaols and penitentiaries, and finds its fitting embodiment in the lives of such monsters as Popes John XXIII and Alexander VI, and in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the obscene questionings of the Confessional and the fiendish deeds of the Inquisition.

Probably most impartial thinkers will consider that the least said about the *miracles* of Romanism, the better for the authority of the illustrious Society which pretends to work them. This, however, will not excuse the enquirer for neglecting to weigh, in the scales of historical truth, with all due sobriety, the wonders wrought by holy coats, and winking Madonnas, and the marvellous achievements of the relics of the Apostles and Saints. This may lead an unlearned man into a very extensive field of enquiry, as those departed worthies are believed to have manifested, since their death, a remarkable talent for multiplying themselves. The full miraculous energy of the Saint dwells, in all its plenitude, in each of his bones, and the number of bones is by no means limited by the artificial rules of modern anatomy. Indeed it is well known that many of the Saints, and most of the Apostles, have each two or three bodies, equally potent, not to mention the supernumerary skin of St. Bartholomew, preserved at Pisa.*

It may be doubted, if any man who goes fully and impartially through this investigation will come out of it with much respect for the authority of the Church of Rome. But whether he comes out of it with much respect, or little, the result at which he arrives is the *product of his private judgment*.

Dr. Challoner, therefore, escapes from the charge of reasoning in a circle, only by making the authority of the Church and of the Scriptures depend on private judgment. The Scriptures depend on the authority of the Church, and the authority of the Church depends on an investigation of her recommendations, made by each man's private judgment. The earth rests on the elephant, and the elephant, without even an intervening tortoise, rests on the cloud! Wherein then does Dr. Challoner differ from the Protestant? He differs in two points: (1) The case which he appeals to private judgment, for final decision, is

* *Vide* Calvin on Relics.

fifty-fold more difficult than that which the Protestant submits. For, while there are at least seven ancient rival Churches which assail, and seek to overthrow each other's claims to be regarded as the true primitive Church, all these rival Churches, with one consent, bear witness to those books which constitute the Protestant Canon of Scripture. (2) He differs also from Protestants, in a second point no less important. He rests the entire fabric of his faith, ultimately, on the historical evidences of the antiquity, celebrity, sanctity and miracles of the Romish Church, while no intelligent Protestant rests his faith in Scripture merely on historical evidences. He takes into account those internal evidences which spring from the characters of divinity which are everywhere stamped on the sacred page. But the believer reaches the full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, in a way that Romanist utterly refuses to recognize, "from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."*

As we cannot base the authority of Scripture on the authority of the Church, without either reasoning in a circle, or appealing to private judgment, and that too in a question more difficult and complicated than the divinity of the Bible, what must a man do before he can reasonably accept any Church as a living infallible teacher?

We reply, he must ascertain,

1. That the Scriptures are a divine revelation. This is the first step towards the discovery of the true Church.

2. That Christ has established a Church on earth. The mere existence of Societies, called Churches, does not prove whether they are divine, human, or Satanic in their origin.

On these two points all Christians are at one. But the seeker for a living infallible Church soon finds himself in debateable ground. He must ascertain,

3. What is the *nature* of the Church.

Is the sense in which the word *Church* is employed in Scripture one, or manifold? Romanists usually take for granted

* Westminster Conf. Faith, ch. 1. 5. *Vide* also 1 John, ii. 20, 27; 1 Cor. ii. 10-12.

that the Church means what the necessities of their argument demands, and, when they define the term, their definition is not drawn from the use of the word in Scripture, but from what the Church of Rome now is. Bellarmine defines it thus: "The Church is a Society of men on earth, united together by the profession of one and the self-same Christian faith, and the communion of the same sacraments under the government of lawful Pastors, and especially of the Roman Pontiff."*

This definition suits exactly the Church of Rome, but it never could have been drawn, by any legitimate process, from Scripture. It is evidently most essential that the enquirer should know whether this is the true idea of the Church, as brought before him in the Scriptures. Is it a visible Society, made up indiscriminately of good and bad men, who make a certain profession of faith, enjoy certain sacraments, and live under a defined government, or is it the true body of Christ, composed of the saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus, of all who have been, of all who are and of all who shall be gathered into one in Christ? Which of these definitions describes the Church to which Christ promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it? This is a vital question, for, if we apply to a corrupt visible organization, like the Church of Laodicea, the promises made to the mystical body of Christ, we shall find ourselves holding that an Apostate Society, which our Lord has spued out of His mouth, is the true spouse of Jesus Christ.

This careful discrimination is all the more necessary, because the Apostle Paul has foretold distinctly a great apostasy in the visible Church, whose leaven was working even in his days, and he has given us the marks by which we may recognize it. And the Apostle John has indicated that this apostasy shall be as like the true Church as a *harlot* is to an *honest woman*.†

But let that be granted, which certainly can never be proved, viz: that the Romish idea of the Church is the Scriptural one, the next step which must be taken is to discover,

* De Eccl. Lib. III. c. 11.

† 2 Thess. II. 3-11; 1 Tim. IV. 1-3; Rev. XII. 1-6 and Rev. XVII. 1-6.

4. Which of all existing Churches is the true Church?

Romanists discussing the Rule of Faith, dwell with peculiar unction on the number of Protestant Churches, but they always forget to mention the Greek, Nestorian, Syrian, and other Oriental Churches. They are silent on the fact that the Syrians claim Peter as the Bishop of Antioch and whatever dignity and authority that may bring them.* They are conveniently oblivious also of the antiquity of the Waldensian Church, which claims to have preserved in its Alpine Valleys, the purity of God's Truth from the earliest Christian ages.

The Churches fall into three great divisions, (1) the Romish Church with 170,000,000 of adherents; (2) the Protestant Churches with about 115,000,000, and (3) the Oriental Churches with 85,000,000. Stanley estimates the Oriental Churches at 100,000,000,† but we prefer the lower figure. According to this estimate, there are 30,000,000 more professing Christians, living outside of the Church of Rome, than are to be found within its pale. It is true that we cannot ascertain truth by a popular vote, but certainly it is not reasonable to take for granted that the *minority* is right, and that the *majority* has erred utterly from the way of life. The claims then of all these Churches require to be examined separately by the man who will not venture to go to God in 'Christ, save as a Church takes him by the hand and leads him. He who does this thoroughly will find it no small undertaking. If he enters upon the examination with the conviction that the Church of Rome is infallibly right, and all the rest infallibly wrong, he can make short work of it; for if facts do not square with his theory, so much the worse for facts. Others will not find the question so easily settled.

But we shall suppose that guided by the light of our private judgment we have, in the study of God's Word, discovered that the Church of Rome is the true Church. Have we assured ourselves of a living infallible teacher to guide us into the certain knowledge of the truth? By no means. We are still far from this land of promise.

* Stanley Eastern Ch., p. 94.

† Eastern Ch., page 89.

5. We must ascertain whether Christ has made His Church a living infallible teacher.

This the Romanist affirms, and the Protestant and the majority of Christians deny. The Romanist points to the declaration "On this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The Protestant replies that this language no more proves that the Church shall be preserved entirely from error, than kept completely from sin. They maintain that all that the language teaches is that Christ shall always have on earth a faithful people, who shall not fall into fatal error, or habitual sin. They point to even stronger language used in reference to every believer. They cite the words which John addressed to each individual Christian, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."* And the Protestant maintains that the one passage no more proves the infallibility of the Church, than the other establishes the infallibility of private judgment.

Let us, however, suppose this point settled in a sense satisfactory to the Romanist. We have not yet done all that private interpretation must accomplish, before we can enjoy the guidance of a living infallible teacher.

6. We must discover *where* this Infallibility resides, or ascertain the *organ* through which it speaks for the instruction of mankind.

We cannot assemble the whole 170,000,000 of the Romish Church and decide what is truth by a majority vote. We cannot go to individual priests or bishops, for they are liable to error. Where then shall we find Infallibility? On this vital question all manner of views are advocated among Romanists. Almost every conceivable shade of opinion has been maintained by Romish divines of the highest authority. Bossuet and Bellarmine, Dollinger and Manning are here wide

* 1 John, ii, 20, 27.

as the poles asunder. Gallicans and Ultramontanes have for ages taken antagonistic positions on this question. Some divines maintain that Infallibility resides in the Pope personally, others that it dwells in a General Council, others still that a Pope and General Council combined are the genuine mirror of Infallibility, while others say that it dwells in the Church, without attempting to define very clearly how its guidance may be secured.

It needs no demonstration to prove that infallibility in the Church can be no practical guide to us, until we know *where* to find it, and until we discover *how to recognize its voice*.

Let us imagine a case strictly parallel. It has been announced, we shall suppose, on good authority, that Canada is blessed with a living infallible guide in all matters political, but his exact whereabouts remains uncertain. There is an oracle by which all the abstruse questions which perplex statesmen can be cleared up; but one says that it is found in the Governor General personally, another in the Governor in Council, and others in the houses of Parliament. There are those again who maintain that the real rulers of the nation are the leaders of political parties. One of this class swears by the Knight of Kingston, a second by the Great Toronto Oracle; and a third, more maritime in his proclivities, declares that the Member for Hants is the man. It needs no argument to show that it may make all the difference in the world to which of these fountains of political wisdom we apply for guidance.

The Jesuit missionary who recently visited Ottawa, was at pains to impress on the minds of his Protestant hearers, what we all believe, that sincerity will not save us. And he had a pleasant illustration to enforce it. "Let us suppose," says the disciple of Loyola, "a man in Ottawa, who wants to go to Chicago, but takes the car for New York. The conductor asks for his ticket, and at once says, 'You are in the wrong car your ticket is for Chicago, but you are going to New York.' 'Well, what of that,' says the passenger, 'I mean well.' 'Your meaning will not go well with you in the end,' says the conductor, 'for you will come out at New York instead of Chicago.'"*

* *Damen*, p. 21.

The illustration is excellent, and we thank the Jesuit for it. It admits, however, of improvement. We shall suppose that His Holiness, in order to escape the pressing attentions of his affectionate Italian subjects, finds it necessary, once more, to leave Rome. And turning his back on the Tiber, and his face towards the setting sun, he determines to make his home in America, and rear for himself a new Vatican in the commercial metropolis of the Great West. In the lapse of time it becomes necessary to convoke another Council, and New York is selected as the place of meeting. At this juncture there resides in Ottawa a devout Roman Catholic who has long been anxious to find a sure solution for religious difficulties. He has been studying Bossuet and Bellarmine until his mind has become unsettled, and he knows not where to go for sure guidance. At one time he is ready to apply to the Council, and the next day he thinks he should go to the Pope. But being a Frenchman, he inclines to the views of his countryman, and hopes that in the multitude of counsellors there will be safety, so he *takes the cars for New York!* Will it come out well with him in the end?

In this parable the Romish Church may read no small part of its own history. When the General Council of Constance, in 1414, not only asserted in words its superiority to the Roman Pontiff, but deposed two infallible Popes, compelled a third to resign and elected another to the vacant chair of St. Peter, was not this the *whole Roman Catholic Church taking the cars for New York?* In 1682, a representative assembly of the French clergy, convoked by Louis XIV, not only rejected the Infallibility of the Pope, but declared a General Council superior to him. Was not this the *whole French Church taking the cars for New York?* And no longer since than 1870, devout Roman Catholics were quite uncertain where to look for Infallibility. When the test vote was taken in the Council of Rome on the dogma of Infallibility, 88 bishops voted *non placet*, or nay; 62 bishops voted *placet juxta modum*, or yea, according to the manner in which you understand it; while upwards of 70 bishops, who were in Rome at the time, shirked the vote altogether.* In a council of less than 600

* Letters of Quirinus, page 797.

bishops, there are 158 who cannot bring themselves to recognize the Pope as personally infallible, while there are 62 who can only give a modified approbation to the dogma; and after all the efforts of the Pope and his party in Rome to break down opposition, there are 88 who boldly vote a direct negative to the dogma.

Indeed down to the late Council, which decided in favor of the personal infallibility of the Pope, it has been quite customary for Romish Controversialists, in Protestant countries, to deny that the Pope's Infallibility was a doctrine of their Church. The writers who opposed McGavin 54 years ago did so.* Dr. Challoner speaks of the Infallibility of the Pope as no article of faith.† The Controversial Catechism of Rev. Stephen Keenan, is a work in high repute among English speaking Romanists. It has been recommended to the faithful by two Romish dignitaries in Scotland, by the late Archbishop Hughes, of New York, and by the *Tablet*, the organ of Archbishop Manning. In a copy now in my possession, printed in Edinburgh in 1851, the following question and answer occur, which have, we understand, *been omitted in those printed since 1870*:

“Q. Must not Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be Infallible?

“A. This is a Protestant invention. It is no article of the Catholic Faith; no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body; that is, by the Bishops of the Church.”

Now as it would be uncharitable to suppose that these writers wished to deceive Protestants, two conclusions are forced upon us, (1) that these authors and all who endorsed and circulated their writings did not know *where* Infallibility was to be found, and (2) that the Church of Rome has so changed, that what was a *Protestant invention* in 1851, became a *Catholic verity* in 1870.

It is then quite evident that down to the time of the Council in Rome, in 1870, Romanists did not know where to look for a living infallible teacher, and if such a teacher is absolutely necessary, our Roman Catholic brethren must have been for

* Protestant, Vol. I. p. 24.

† Unerring Auth., page 256.

1800 years in a deplorable condition. We cannot say that we are surprised at their uncertainty for eighteen centuries; the marvel to us is that the majority of them have got over it, and have persuaded themselves that Infallibility resides in the Pope personally. History should have been written over again before any one who reads its pages, can believe without hesitating, such a dogma.

Where was this personal Infallibility of the Bishop of Rome, when, during the great Arian controversy, Pope Liberius first sustained orthodoxy, and then, when Arianism got, for the time being, into the ascendant, endorsed an Arian creed and condemned Athanasius?

Pope Zosimas wrote two letters to the Bishops of North Africa, approving strongly of the doctrines of Pelagius. When, however, the African Bishops, at the Council of Carthage, who seem to have been quite ignorant of the Infallibility of the Pope, protested against his heretical sentiments, he changed his mind, and condemned the system which he had before endorsed. Where was Papal Infallibility in those days?

Pope Honorius adopted the Monothelite heresy, and sustained it by his letters. For this he was anathematised by the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 680, and his writings were publicly burned. They certainly had not discovered in the year 680 that the Pope is personally infallible. Pope Leo II. no less emphatically condemned Honorius. "We anathematise thee, Honorius," said his equally infallible successor, "who didst attempt to overthrow the Apostolic Church by thy profane treachery."* This ought to be a perplexing case to the believers of the personal Infallibility of the Pope; for they are bound to believe a contradiction. They must believe, without doubt or hesitation, both with Honorius and with Leo II.; in other words, they must hold as absolutely certain that Honorius was *infallibly right*, and, with equal certainty, that he was *infallibly wrong*.

And where did infallibility reside during the great schism, when, for a period of 37 or 38 years, (1378 to 1416,) there

* Milman's Latin Christianity, Vol. II., p. 286-7, and D'Aubigne, in Brit. & For. Eve. Review.

were rival lines of Popes reigning in Avignon and Rome? Indeed, at the closing portion of this period, there were for six years, no less than three Popes reigning, each of whom was acknowledged by a portion of the faithful. When the Council of Constance assembled, in order to bring this scandal to an end, it deposed two Popes, compelled a third to resign, and elected another to fill the vacant chair. It is quite possible, that, had the Council of Constance not interposed, the Romish Church might have been blessed, to the present day, with three equally Infallible Popes, still engaged in the work of anathematising each other. Is it any marvel, that eighty-eight Bishops, two years ago, voted Nay, in the Council, on the dogma of the Pope's Infallibility?

7. But we shall suppose the enquirer is stumbled with none of these stubborn, historical facts, but rejoices in a faith which says, "I believe, because it is impossible." Is he sure that he has reached the voice of unerring wisdom? By no means. He has discovered, or at least thinks he has, that Infallibility is lodged in the Pope personally. But is the Pope Infallible in *everything he says*? Certainly not. It is only when he speaks *ex Cathedra*. But when does the Pope speak *ex Cathedra*? One would suppose this is a very simple question. It might be imagined that whenever "the Pope has spoken publicly on a point of doctrine, either of his own accord, or in answer to questions addressed to him, he has spoken *ex Cathedra*," And so, no doubt, it would be held, if it were not thought desirable to except certain inconvenient decisions of Popes, from the privileges of Infallibility, accorded generally in other cases. There are not many Romanists who can help feeling it rather awkward, to assert the Infallibility of the doctrines taught by Honorius, Vigilius, and other Popes, who have publicly sanctioned heresy. Hence there are no less than four or five distinct theories, among Romish divines, who believe in the personal Infallibility of the Pope, as to when he speaks *ex Cathedra*, and when he does not.*

And as it never has been decided which of these theories is correct, no man living can certainly know when the Pope

* Edgar's Variations of Popery, p. 190-191, and The Pope and the Council, page 827-829.

gives an *ex Cathedra* decision. Every man must decide by his own *private judgment*, when the Pope speaks Infallibly, *ex Cathedra*, and when he exercises his privilege of blundering, like other men. The Romanist, after all his laborious investigations, has reached a point, where everything hangs upon *private interpretation*.

Try, if you can, to take in the stupendous folly of the process, by which the Romanist seeks to escape from the uncertainties and errors of private judgment, and gain an Infallible teacher, who can show him what is Scripture, and what Scripture means. He must begin by ascertaining, that the Scriptures are a divine revelation, and that Christ has established a Church on earth. He must then, from an examination of Scripture, learn the *nature* of the Church; which of all existing Churches is the *true* Church; whether the Church is *Infallible*; and what is the *organ* through which this Infallibility finds utterance; and then, *how* he may distinguish utterances which are Infallible, from others which are not. And all this he must do, by his *private judgment*, before he can have a living Infallible guide to teach him.

May we not well ask, if, on the one hand, private judgment can lead us through such complicated and almost endless investigations to sure conclusions, where is the need of a living Infallible teacher? And if, on the other hand, private judgment cannot be trusted, did ever a house rest on such a quagmire, or, did ever Hindoo Cosmogony plant its tortoise on such an airy cloud as that on which the whole fabric of Romanism rests?

II. We must now take another step in our argument. We shall suppose, what only a man prepared to shut his eyes to contradictions, can maintain, viz.: that the Pope is Infallible, when he speaks *ex Cathedra*, and that there is a criterion by which, *ex Cathedra* decisions can be surely recognized. From this living Infallible teacher, we learn, what books constitute the Bible, and the sense which we are to attach to its words. Have we now escaped from the uncertainties of private interpretation? This is supposed to be one of the peculiar excellencies of the Romish Rule of Faith? How does the case really stand?

If God has constituted the Pope a living Infallible teacher, his decisions, as we have seen, partake of the nature of Scripture. They are, for all practical purposes, additions to the Holy Scriptures. They are characterized by the same Infallible truth and divine authority. The fact that they are supposed to be interpretations of Scripture and tradition, does not change their essential nature. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians is no less Scripture, because it contains interpretations of statements made in the First Epistle. And certainly it is no less in need of interpretation, than other portions of the Sacred Volume. If then, Church interpretations are possessed of the same characteristics as Scripture, they require, like Scripture, to be interpreted, and the only interpreter that can come after the Church, is private judgment.

Wherein then, have we escaped from the uncertainties of private judgment? If God has inspired or guided Popes to write Infallible Bulls, or Letters, He has not inspired us to understand them. And in Papal writings, as in Paul's Epistles, there are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable may possibly wrest to their own destruction. And if an unlearned man cannot understand the Scriptures, written in the simple language of every-day life, how shall he comprehend the writings of the Popes, couched in the hard and technical language of the Schools?

We are told that mankind generally, are utterly unable to understand the writings of some thirty men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and it is gravely proposed, by way of mending matters, to give them, to say nothing of the Decretals and Acts of Councils sanctioned by Romish Pontiffs, the dogmatic writings of 256 Popes, be the same more or less, which they must interpret without mistake, and believe without reserve. And, although the writings of the 256 Infallibilities aforesaid, have never been fully collected and published, nor seen by one in ten thousand of the faithful, they have the pleasing assurance added, that if they do not believe all that these Popes have taught, and "believe without doubting and hesitating," they shall be un'one for ever.

So far then, is the Romish Rule of Faith, from delivering

us from the uncertainties of private judgment, in the matter of interpretation, that it *aggravates* the evil and extends its *area*.

Even when one Pope explains the writings, or decisions of another, and his own are in turn explained by some later Pontiff, who is to explain the decision of the last? Must not the private Christian interpret for himself?

It is only a new version of the old story: the earth resting on the elephant, and the elephant on the tortoise, but all at last must rest on the cloud of private interpretation.

It is true that the tendency of Romanism is to discourage thought among its votaries, and lead them to render a blind submission, to a Priesthood acknowledged to be fallible. But such blind submission, to, he knows not what, is not faith. A man may shut his eyes, and cease to think, he may make his mind a vacuum, and call it faith, but it is not faith, it is sheer emptiness. Faith implies a grasp of the object of faith. And the moment a Romanist attempts to attach any meaning to the words or teachings of his Rule of Faith, that instant he begins to exercise his private judgment, as much as does the Protestant, when he reads his Bible, to learn from it the mind of God. When the believer in Papal Infallibility, seeks to ascertain whether his Church has sanctioned the views of Manning, or Dollinger, or the doctrines of the Jesuits, or of the Dominicans, he is betaking himself to private interpretation, no less than the Protestant, who searches the Scriptures to see whether they teach Calvinism, or Armenianism, and, we may add, that he is quite as liable to error.

III. We are now prepared to take another step in advance. We can now show, that, as might be expected, all the leading objections urged by Romanists against the Protestant view of the Rule of Faith, hold with increased force against their own. We can only touch on the more prominent.

1. It is objected that it was a long time before the Protestant Rule of Faith was in existence, and therefore it cannot be our guide.

Many ages had passed away before any part of the Old Testament was written. The New Testament was not com-

menced for several years after Christ's ascension, and John did not complete it for sixty-five years after that event. And they tell us, farther, that the Canon of the New Testament was so unsettled until the fourth century, that Christians did not know what books to acknowledge as divine.

We reply, (1) That no Protestant ever asserted that the Scriptures were a Rule of Faith, before they were written. What they maintain is, that these Scriptures, being Infallible and divine, are a rule now. (2) The Romish Rule of Faith had no existence during any portion of the old dispensation. No one can pretend that there was a living Infallible teacher in the world, from Adam until Christ. And if this is essential to salvation, now, why should it not be then? (3) That if the statements which Romanists make, in reference to the uncertainty of the New Testament Canon, until the fourth century were true, which they are not,* it would be quite enough to reply that there was no living Infallible Pope recognized in the Church until more than six hundred years after Christ. When the Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 680, anathematised Pope Honorius as a heretic, they certainly had not discovered that the Pope is a living Infallible teacher. Indeed we have seen that high Romish authorities have, in our day, branded it as "a Protestant invention." It is not yet two years, since the Council of Rome decided where this living Infallible teacher, whose voice is the most important element in the Romish Rule of Faith, is to be found. And men have gone to heaven the six thousand years they did not possess the Romish Rule of Faith, apparently just as well, as they have during the *two years* that it has been known to mankind.

2. It is objected that the Protestant Rule does not secure unity in faith among Protestants.

We reply (1) That in essentials there is unity of faith among all true Christians. They all trust in Christ for salvation, and seek to serve Him according to the light they enjoy, and none of them consciously rejects any truth which Christ has revealed. (2) That the differences among Protestants, are not greater, than those which obtain between Jansenists and Jesuits, Domin-

* *Vide* Appendix A.

icans and Franciscans, Gallicans and Ultramontanes, who are all found nestling together in the bosom of the Church of Rome. (3) That if the differences were as great as they are represented, the Protestant Rule of Faith is not to blame, but those who *do not follow it*. Romanists cannot pretend that their Rule of Faith prevents all who acknowledge it from going astray. Have not some of them been excommunicated for their heresies? Have not others of them so erred that when they died, they went to Purgatory? And have not others erred still more, and, dying in mortal sin, gone where neither priestly masses, nor well-filled purses can bring them help? It is evident that no Rule of Faith, Protestant or Romish, can save from error those who acknowledge it. The *rule* may be right, and the *use* made of it wrong.

3. It is objected, that before the invention of the art of printing, the Bible was so expensive, that it could not have been designed for a Rule of Faith. One Romish divine estimates the price in these olden times as equal to \$3,650.00, and another, more modest, puts down the figure at \$500.*

We reply, (1) That no Protestant has ever dreamed that in order to salvation, a man must own a Bible. When any one asks "What must I do to be saved?" the Protestant answer always has been, not, "buy a Bible," but, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He may learn what he is to believe, in order to salvation, either by going directly to the Holy Scriptures, or from the teachings of others, whose knowledge came originally from that fountain. To constitute the Scriptures a Rule of Faith, it is not necessary that every man should possess a copy of them, though, for many reasons, it is very desirable that they should be in the hands of all. It is enough that they are the ultimate standard of appeal. It is not necessary that every man should possess a copy of the Statutes of Canada, or, even that he should be able to purchase them, in order that they may be to him a rule of life, in his civil relations.

We reply, (2) That it was always easier, and less costly, to get access to a Bible, than to go to Rome and consult the

* Damen's Lectures, page 8, and Rev. Dr. O'Connor's Reply, page 9.

Pope. No poor man can leave his family, and go on an expensive pilgrimage to the Eternal City. Yet there, if the Romish doctrine is correct, he must go, provided he desires to believe all that God has taught, "without doubting, without hesitating." He must learn directly, from the lips of the living Infallible teacher. For, if he goes to a priest, he knows the priest may err. Martin Luther was a priest. If he applies even to a bishop, he knows the bishop may err. Did not eighty-eight bishops vote against the Pope's Infallibility? To the Pope himself he must go, otherwise doubt is inevitable in every reflecting mind.

Now let us suppose the Pope to devote twelve hours daily, to teach the faithful, how long would it take him to give even fifteen minutes instruction to each of the 170,000,000 who own him as their spiritual guide? It would require not less than 9,300 years. As it is therefore, manifestly impossible, for each of the faithful, even once in his lifetime, to consult the Bishop of Rome, it is absolutely essential for every man, who desires to believe all that God has taught, without doubting, to possess, not a Bible, but a living Pope for his private use.

4. It is objected, that *unlearned* men cannot know whether the Protestant Bible is translated correctly into their own language. They can never believe, with a divine faith, a matter so uncertain. Unfortunately, this objection, if it is worth anything, proves too much for the Romanist. The Pope usually writes in Latin. And if the Pope is Infallible, he has not yet declared himself omniscient. He cannot translate his Bulls and *ex Cathedra* decisions, into all languages, for he does not know them. And it is exceedingly difficult to believe, "without doubting or hesitating," that his Infallibility can enable him to certify the correctness of translations into languages which he does not understand. The Romanist's liability to uncertainty and error from translations, is just as much greater than that to which the Protestant is exposed, as the Acts of Councils and the decrees and writings of 256 Popes are more bulky than the Bible.

But what assurance have Romanists, that even their Scriptures are translated correctly? They were translated, not by

Popes, but by men acknowledged to be just as liable as others to make mistakes. It is true that Sixtus V. tried his hand at the work, but his success was not such as to inspire much confidence, even in Popes, as translators. The edition which he sent forth, corrected by his own hand, and supported by a Bull denouncing an anathema against any one who should dare to change it, even in the smallest particular, was found so full of mistakes and errors, that it had to be re-called, and a new edition, revised and corrected by Bellarmine and others, sent forth in its place. This revised edition has been found by actual comparison, made by Dr. James, to differ in more than 2,000 places, from that of the Infallible Sixtus V. Now when a fallible Cardinal undertakes to correct the work of an infallible Pontiff, can the ignorant and unlearned believe, with a divine faith, that the Cardinal is right and the Pontiff wrong? It is true the work of Bellarmine was sanctioned by Clement VIII., but this does not remove the difficulty. It is usually supposed that when doctors differ, laymen may doubt, but when the doctors are infallible, doubt is damnable. There is nothing for it, but for all the faithful to believe that Sixtus and Clement were both infallibly right. Let not heretics grin! All that is demanded of the faithful is, that they should believe, with "a divine faith, without doubting, without hesitating," *two thousand contradictions*!!

We must now close our examination of the Romish doctrine of the Rule of Faith. We have weighed it in the balances and it is found wanting. Its boasted certainty depends on a vicious circle, or rests on the repudiated authority of private judgment.

On this basis reposes the whole fabric of Romanism. Were this a merely speculative question, we might laugh, as indeed we are often forced to do, at the folly which builds such a superstructure on such a foundation. But the recognition of the Romish doctrine of the Rule of Faith, and the Papal Infallibility as an essential element of it, carries with it consequences which should fill our hearts with sadness.

It puts it into the power of a man, as erring as we are, to

take the place of God, on earth. It clothes him with authority to take from us, or close that book which God has given as a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path. It sends the sinner to the Church, instead of the Saviour, who cries, "Come unto Me all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." It stereotypes and binds on the consciences of men the entire system of error and superstition which Popes have sanctioned. Progress, save from bad to worse, becomes impossible. Civil and religious liberty disappear in its presence, and persecution becomes sacred. The only liberty which remains to man, is liberty to believe what the Pope teaches, and do what he commands.



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APPENDIX A.

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The alleged uncertainty of the Canon until the 4th Century.

It seems desirable for the sake of those who have not paid attention to this question to correct the reckless assertions of Father Damen.

I. In reference to the *extent* of this uncertainty he says,—*

"Even the learned themselves were disputing whether preference should be given to the Gospel of Simon or that of Matthew, to the Gospel of Mary or that of Luke, the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus or the Gospel of St. John. And so it was in regard to the epistles: there were many spurious epistles written, and the people were at a loss for over three hundred years to know which Gospel was false or spurious, or which inspired," &c.

Had such language come from the lips of an avowed infidel it would have excited less surprise, but coming from the mouth of a professed teacher of Christianity, one knows not whether he should wonder most at the recklessness of the statements, or at the infatuation of the man who, to gain a fancied advantage over an opponent, makes assertions which, if true, go far to overturn the very foundations of every form of Christianity.

How do the facts stand?

The New Testament is made up of twenty-seven books, containing 7,959 verses. Of these there are twenty books, containing 7,059 verses, or eight-ninths of the entire New Testament, which, there is the clearest evidence for asserting, were received in the Christian Church without question, from the time they were written. The Apocryphal books, like the Gospel of Simon, to which Father Damen refers, were never regarded, even by a respectable minority of Christians, as of divine authority, and those who were inclined to respect them did not bring them forward, as the Jesuit insinuates, in competition with the four genuine Gospels which were *uncontroverted*.

There are five short and late epistles, containing 222 verses, or one *thirty-sixth part* of the New Testament, in regard to which, for a time, a certain measure of hesitation was felt. These five, viz.: 2nd and 3rd John, Jude, 2nd Peter and James, Eusebius informs us, were received by the *majority* of Christians, but were questioned by others. No such uncertainty as Father Damen ascribes to the four Gospels and the whole New Testament could be said to have existed even in reference to this small portion of it. The majority of Churches and Christians always regarded them as of divine authority.

The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse were received at first, and for a considerable period without reserve, but were afterwards, for doctrinal reasons, called in question by a section of the Church for a season. And it is specially noteworthy, that the portion of the Church which was most guilty of controverting the Canonical authority of these Books is that which we are now asked to believe is their infallible guardian.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is repeatedly quoted by Clement of Rome as canonical, and was received by the entire Eastern Church from the beginning. It is even recognised apparently in 2 Peter, iii, 15. It was only in the third century, when it began to be quoted in support of the views of the Montanists and Novationists, that its canonical authority began to be questioned in the West and especially in Rome.

The Apocalypse, written almost at the close of the first century, was recognized by all the leading Fathers of the second century, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Melito, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Theophilus, and others.

It was first assailed by Caius, a Presbyter of Rome, in the third century, on account of the countenance which it was supposed to give to Millenarianism. And, although he was answered by Hippolytus, doubts continued to be entertained for a century and a half, in the West, especially in Rome, respecting it. But so decided was the conviction throughout the Church, of the divine authority, both of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the Apocalypse, that Eusebius, writing in 324, before the Council of Nice, classed both of these books among the *Homologumena*, or *uncontroverted Scriptures*.

Origin, who wrote 100 years before the Council of Nice, gives a list of the Books of the New Testament, which answers exactly to that which we now have. He accepted neither more nor fewer Books than we now hold as Canonical.*

The Peschito Syriac version is the oldest translation of the New Testament in existence. It was made towards the end of the first century, or early in the second. It has been used in the public services of all the Syrian Churches, down to the present day. Does this earliest of versions contain any trace of these Apocryphal Books which Father Damen would have us believe were almost as highly esteemed, for three hundred years, as the Books we hold as Canonical? Not one of them has found a place in this version. But the four Gospels, the Acts, the fourteen Epistles of Paul, 1st John, James, and 1st Peter, are all there. The Apocalypse, which possibly was not written when this version was made is a-wanting. So also are 2nd Peter, Jude, and 2nd and 3rd John, which were all written at a late period, and possibly had not then been sufficiently authenticated in that part of the Church where this version was made. But with these

* Vide Gausson, page 27; and Eusebius Eccl. Hist. Book IV. c. 25.

exceptions, the entire New Testament was recognized in the early part of the second century, exactly as we have it. So much for the sweeping statements of the Jesuit, in reference to the *extent* of the *uncertainty*.

II. In reference to the *means* by which the measure of uncertainty, which did exist was removed, Father Damen is even farther from the mark.

He says, "It was not until the fourth century that the Pope of Rome, the Head of the Church, the successor of Peter, assembled together the Bishops of the world, in a Council, and there in that Council it was decided that the Bible, as we Catholics have it now, is the word of God, and that the Gospels of Simon, Nicodemus, Mary, the Infancy of Jesus, and Barnabas, and all these other Epistles were spurious, or, at least, unauthentic," &c.

We may safely assert, that it would be exceedingly difficult to discover a sentence in which a greater amount of pure fabrication is to be found. It is fiction from beginning to end. Glance at the facts, as known to every student of history.

1. There were only two General Councils held in the fourth century, viz.: Nice, A.D. 325, and Constantinople, A.D. 381. Neither of these Councils was called by the Pope of Rome. They were convoked by the reigning Emperor, without even consulting the Pope beforehand.* The Pope did not preside over these Councils. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, in Spain, presided at Nice, and the Bishop of Rome was not even represented at the Council of Constantinople. The pretended confirmation of the Nicene decrees by Pope Silvester, is one of the well-known forgeries by which the Papacy has sought to bolster up a usurped authority, which has no foundation in Christian antiquity. These Councils, moreover, did not pass any decree, in reference to the Canon of Scripture. In their decisions, which have come down to us, there is not one word as to the books which should, or should not be regarded as canonical. The Council of Nice, instead of pretending to give authority to the Holy Scriptures, expressly bases its decrees on Scripture. It introduces its creed with a preamble, in these words: "As we have learned from the divine Scriptures, this is our creed: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty," &c. †

2. There were two small Provincial Councils, held in the fourth century, which dealt with the books which were to be read in Christian assemblies, viz., Laodicea and Carthage. But these Councils were not called or presided over by the Bishop of Rome. The decrees of the Council of Laodicea, held 364 A. D., were afterwards confirmed by the General Council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, and were regarded as binding throughout the ancient Church. Does then the Catalogue of the Canonical books given by the Council of Laodicea and accepted by the General Council of

* Janus, p. 63.

† Vide Gausson, page 44.

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Chalcedon, agree with that of Romanists? *It does not.* It leaves out all the Apocryphal books which the Church of Rome, in the 16th Century, thrust into the Old Testament; and agrees in every respect with the Canon of Scripture as now received by the Protestant and Greek Churches, save that the book of Revelation is omitted. This omission does not, however, imply that they regarded it as uncanonical, but only that they deemed it too mysterious to be read in the regular lessons in Christian assemblies. Of the decrees of the Council of Carthage, we need not speak, as they were not confirmed by any General Council.

No Council attempted to settle the Canon of Scripture authoritatively until some 50 bishops, assembled at Trent in the 16th Century, had the audacity to call themselves a General Council, and to essay to do so. The question of the Canon was left to settle itself, by the ordinary laws of literary and historical evidence, *without the decree of any Council.*

The entire statement, therefore, of Father Damen, in all its parts, is an impudent fabrication, unredeemed by a single element of truth.

APPENDIX B.

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The Church of Rome and the Reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue.

On this question Romish divines present two faces. When you urge upon them the necessity of giving the Scriptures to the people, they tell you that it is a very obscure book to which any meaning can be attached, and that in the hands of the people it is an exceedingly dangerous work, which is more likely to do harm than good to those who read it. Dr O'Connor does not hesitate to ascribe to it all the errors which he charges on Protestants. He tells Mr. Stevenson that his rule "which has led so many into error and often into the greatest blasphemies may lead him astray also."* And the highest authorities in the Romish Church speak in the same fashion. It need excite no surprise that few Roman Catholics read the Scriptures. If they believe their spiritual teachers how can they dare peruse so dangerous a volume?

When, however, you accuse the Romish Church of denying the Bible to the people, they reply that it is a gross calumny, a complete misrepresentation. "Go," says Father Damen, "among your Catholic neighbors, my Protestant friends, and you will hardly find a family but has a family Bible, and it is open to all"† Such an audacious statement deserves only one answer, which we shall not give.

It is a sad commentary on the morality that Romanism cherishes, that a man making such an assertion could be tolerated by his hearers. It is not too much to affirm that when these words fell from the lips of the Jesuit, there was not a Roman Catholic in his audience who did not know that he was listening to a falsehood. We have ample means of judging of the extent to which the Scriptures are circulated among our Roman Catholic brethren in Canada, and we can tell Father Damen that the only impression his mendacious assertion can make on the minds of intelligent Protestants is that he is a fit advocate of a system of which "speaking lies in hypocrisy"‡ is a predicted mark.

Rev. Dr. O'Connor is more cautious in his language, but he evidently desires to leave the same impression as did the Jesuit. As evidence of the zeal of the Church of Rome for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, he parades a long list of Romish versions and editions printed, for the most part, before Luther's. It is strange that it did not occur to him that if the Church of Rome is indeed anxious to circulate the Scriptures, she might, with her ample means, have, long since, anticipated the work of the

* Page 14. † Lectures, page 25. ‡ 1 Tim., iv., 2.

British and Foreign Bible Society, and put it out of the power of any one to question her interest in the good work. Ah! we suppose that when it comes to this point, the Doctor remembers again that the Bible is a very dangerous book, which may lead men into the worst errors and the most fearful blasphemies!

On the Dr's. list of editions and versions, taken from an un-named author, we remark :

1. Some of them were made by *private* persons, for whose work the Church of Rome deserves neither credit nor blame. She had no more to do with them than with the Battle of Hastings, or the discovery of America.

2. That so far as they were sanctioned by the Church of Rome, they were not intended for general circulation among the laity. The free use of them was never allowed to the people. Dr. O'Connor does not venture to affirm, nor will any honest man of competent information assert, that the people were allowed to peruse them, without restriction. Yet this is the only point he needed to prove. Indeed many of these versions were mere abortive attempts at translation, which were quite unfit for general use. As regards the early German versions, Michellet observes from Seckendorf, "that they were neither suited for nor allowed to the people. *'Nec legi permittebantur, nec ob styli et typorum horridatam satisfacere poterant.'*" *

3. That the list is in many respects *unreliable and deceptive*.

We can only give a few specimens by which the reader can judge of the credit due to this un-named author, whom Dr. O'Connor follows. The very first version on his list is one printed so early that it has neither date nor name of place on it; and had the writer been candid, he would have added that the *author*, whether Turk, Catholic or heretic, is *unknown*, and that were he known, it would probably be seen that the Romish Church had just as little to do with his version as with the discovery of the art of printing.

His second version is one, said to have been printed by Faust, in 1472, of the existence of which we can find no indication. And as Faust is believed to have died in the plague of Paris in 1466, he can hardly have printed a Catholic version in 1472, unless Dr. O'Connor has private information that his old business was carried on by the printer in the *intermediate state*.

A Bohemian version of 1488 does duty in the learned Doctor's catalogue. But the only Bohemian version of that date of which I can find any trace is one issued by the United Brethren of Bohemia. Does Dr. O'Connor imagine that because the Church of Rome with all her persecutions failed to exterminate these Brethren, that she has a right to confiscate their translation of the Scripture and claim the honor to herself?

* Vide E. B. Elliott Horae Apoc. ii., 92.

† Vide E. B. Elliott Horae Apoc. ii., 571; and Book and its Story, page 170.

The translation of Jacques Le Fevre (incorrectly given in his list as Jacques C. Fevre,) is claimed as a Romish version, with how much fairness the following facts will show. Le Fevre was one of the most active instruments in promoting the Reformation in its earlier stages in France. It was from his lips that the great Reformer, Farel, first heard the doctrines which he afterwards taught with such success in Geneva. Le Fevre taught justification by faith before Luther had proclaimed that article of a standing or falling Church. He rejected the Apocryphal books from the Canon, and freely censured the Vulgate Version. And although his natural timidity kept him from breaking entirely with Rome, his sympathies were so completely with the Reformers that the Romish party in Paris, where he held a Professorship, made him the object of such bitter persecution that he was compelled to leave the city and seek a quiet retreat elsewhere. In 1526 the Parliament, urged on by the Romish party, took active measures to counteract the work of Le Fevre, and issued a proclamation in Paris and the leading cities of the kingdom, which declared, "All persons are forbidden to put up to sale, or translate from Latin into French, the Epistles of St. Paul, (as Le Fevre had done in 1512,) the Apocalypse and other books."* And this is the version which Dr. O'Connor modestly asks

* Vide Gausson, p. 641. D'Aubigne's Hist. Ref. Calvin, pages 342 and 369.
us to credit to the Church of Rome!!!

From this specimen, and it is only a specimen, the reader can judge of the confidence which should be placed in this list. Had Dr. O'Connor proved that Roman Catholics print and circulate one Bible for twenty that are sent forth by Protestants, he would have done something that would have come nearer to the point.

But there are two ways by which we can judge of the position of the Church of Rome in relation to the circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, without the aid of the Doctor's deceptive list, and which even that list cannot set aside. We can ascertain it (1) from the authoritative decisions of her rulers, and (2) from her deeds. These are *criteria* in which there is no deception. To these we appeal.

Pope Pius IV., in his Bull sanctioning the Index and the accompanying Rules, prohibits the violating of the Rules under pain "of mortal sin and severe punishment, at the discretion of the Bishops."

The fourth Rule reads as follows, viz.: "Inasmuch, as it is manifest from experience, that if the Holy Bible, translated into the vulgar tongue, be indiscriminately allowed to every one, the temerity of men will cause more evil than good to arise from it, it is, on this point, referred to the judgment of the Bishop or Inquisitors who may, by the advice of the Priest or Confessor, permit the reading of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue by Catholic authors, to those persons whose faith and piety they apprehend will be augmented, and not injured, by it; and this permission they must have in writing. But if any shall have the presumption to

read or possess it without any such written permission, he shall not receive absolution until he shall first have delivered up such Bible to the Ordinary. Booksellers, however, who shall sell or otherwise dispose of Bibles in the vulgar tongue, to any person not having such permission, shall forfeit the value of the books, to be applied by the Bishop to some pious use; and be subjected by the Bishop to such other penalties as the Bishop shall judge proper, according to the quality of the offence. But regulars shall neither read nor purchase such Bibles without a special license from their superiors."

From this Rule it is evident that no Romanist can read even a Romish translation with notes, without incurring "mortal sin," unless he has a *written permission* from his *Bishop or Inquisitor*, and that can only be given by the advice of his Confessor; and no bookseller may sell such a Bible to any not having a permission in writing to buy. This is the *unrepealed* law of the Church of Rome to this day. It is true that she finds it impossible to enforce fully such a tyrannical enactment in Protestant countries, but it is the *law* all the same.

Dr. O'Connor is pleased to say in reference to this Rule, that "Pius IV. did indeed, after the close of the Council of Trent, impose restrictions of a temporary and local character on the indiscriminate reading of the Bible in the vernacular tongues, in that period of religious vertigo, which followed the outbreak of the Reformation," &c.

What evidence is there that this Rule is merely a *temporary and local* restriction? There is nothing in the language to suggest that it was intended for one age or country. Does Dr. O'Connor supply any other evidence, save his own *ipse dixit*?

Like Father Damen, he refers to the letter of Pius VI., in 1778, in which he gives his approbation to the Italian translation of Anthony Martini. He reminds us that this letter is printed on the first page of every Romish Bible. But he does not tell his readers, that in the Admonition which precedes it in the same page, it is stated that "it was judged necessary to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar languages without the advice and permission of the Pastors and spiritual Guides whom God has appointed to govern his Church." And in the Admonition there is no hint that this rule has ever been repealed. So that, after all, the approbation of Martini's version applies only where a *permission in writing* has been obtained from a Bishop or Inquisitor.

But this is not all: Martini's translation is not merely a version, it is also a commentary of ponderous dimensions, published originally in 23 vols., 4to; and afterwards at Turin in 1818, in 31 vols.; and it is expressly approved by Pope Pius VI., "especially because it added explanatory notes from the Fathers. Thus," adds his Holiness, "you have not swerved either from the *Laws of the Congregation of the Index*, or the Constitution

published on this subject by Benedict XIV.,” &c. Yet in face of all this, Dr. O'Connor brings forward this very letter to show that one of the most important of the Laws of the Congregation of the Index has been swerved from by the whole Church of Rome!

Pius VI. did really recommend these 23 volumes, where the Scripture bears much the same relation to the Commentary that a grain of wheat does to the peck of chaff in which it is buried! Was it not kind of him? How admirably adapted these 23 vols., 4to, were for circulation among the people, *provided* they could get a permission in writing, from a Bishop or Inquisitor to read them!

But Dr. O'Connor's memory is still farther in fault respecting Martini's version. He forgets to mention that when in 1813 this very translation of the New Testament, which is recommended on the first page of every Romish Bible, was stereotyped in London, and published in a shape more likely to reach the mass of the people, it was, along with the edition of Livorno (Leghorn, 1818, and that of Italia 1817, put in the Index of Books prohibited to be sold, by a decree dated January 13th, 1820!*

Long after this letter of Pius VI., by which Dr. O'Connor imagines he can delude us into the notion that the unrevoked 4th Rule of the Index, is a mere temporary regulation required at the period of “religious vertigo which followed the outbreak of the Reformation,” and which has ceased to be binding, Pope Pius VII. in his Bull of 1816, and Pope Leo XII. in his circular letter of 1824, quote with approbation the language of this very 4th Rule. Which is the better authority, two Popes in Rome, or two priests in Ottawa?

The famous dogmatic Bull Unigenitus, published against Quesnel by Pope Clement XI., in 1713, condemns as “false, rash, pernicious, heretical and impious,” &c., &c., the following propositions, viz.:

79th. “It is useful, at all times, in all places and for all sorts of persons, to study the Holy Scripture and to know its spirit, devotion and mysteries.”

80th. “The obscurity of God's Word is not a reason for laymen to dispense with reading it.”

These and many similar propositions are condemned as *false* and *heretical*, and all bishops and inquisitors are enjoined to punish all who hold them, “calling in, if necessary, the assistance of the secular arm.” We presume that even Dr. O'Connor will not venture to affirm that either heresy or this Bull can be *temporary* or *local*, yet he thinks it becoming to charge those with “slander” who represent the Church of Rome as opposing the free circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular, and even contrives to get up a very respectable display of indignation at those who at Bible Society Meetings, are constantly letting in the light upon the conduct of the Romish priesthood.

* Horne's Introd., vol. ii., Appendix 45.

We cannot agree with Dr. O'Connor that this Rule is *temporary*. Deeds which speak louder than words, proclaim the contrary. And we cannot agree with him that this opposition to the free circulation of the Scriptures has any direct connection with "the religious vertigo which followed the outbreak of the Reformation."

Three centuries before the Reformation, this "religious vertigo" was as much dreaded by the Church of Rome as since. In 1229, the Council of Toulouse absolutely prohibited the laity from possessing the Scriptures.* And the very houses of those who had the Scriptures were ordered to be utterly destroyed. Sismodi tells us that in these days "the first indication of heresy was considered to be the citation of either the Epistles or Gospels." Pope Innocent III. in the 13th century assailed the circulation of the Scriptures in the vernacular with all his energy. In 1410, the Decree of Pope Alexander V. condemned all translations into the vulgar tongues.†

This "religious vertigo" discovered itself in all its power three hundred years before the Reformation, and it is as bad as ever, wherever Romanism reigns undisturbed. It appears in a milder type in England, Scotland, Germany, the United States, and wherever Protestantism prevails. It has always been very bad in Ireland. It has been severe in France and, until recently, in Austria, where a few years ago the traveller had to leave his Bible behind when he crossed the frontier. Until the other day, they suffered from the most malignant form of this "religious vertigo" in Spain and Italy, but in no place did it show such alarming symptoms as in Rome. In proportion as any country is thoroughly under the sway of the Papacy does this opposition to the free circulation of the Bible manifest its power.

In Brazil, the Rev. J. Spaulding, in 1837, found the Bible to an astonishing and almost incredible extent, an unknown or new book, a real curiosity. He found those who had never heard of it, until lately. A Catholic gentleman remarked to him that he did not believe there were four hundred Bibles in the Brazils, among a population of at least five millions.‡

In Spain, the Bible was kept with the utmost care out of the hands of the people. And when Isabella fled, so eager were the Spaniards to taste the forbidden fruit, that *five thousand* copies of Scripture were sold in the streets of Madrid at a single stand in one day. In Rome, Rev. J. A. Clark, Philadelphia, states that, in 1838, he found the Bible a strange and rare book. Few of the common people even knew what is meant by a Bible.§ Rev. Dr. N. Murray gives precisely similar testimony as the

* E. B. Elliott, *Horae Apoc.* ii, 22. Gaussen, p. 519.

† E. B. Elliott, ii, 22.

‡ C. Elliott's *Delin. Rom.* p. 28.

§ C. Elliott's *Delin. Roma*, p. 28.

result of personal observation.* The late Rev. Dr. de Sanctis, a parish priest of the Maddalena in Rome, a doctor of theology, a theologian of the Inquisition, a man of the highest character, was converted to the Gospel from Romanism by reading the Bible. What is his testimony? He says that he had, up to that time, known the Bible only by extracts, such as are to be met in the services of the Churches and in theological works.†

It is not twenty-five years since we find a distinguished English gentleman writing, "I have gone through the whole City of Rome, and I have visited all the book shops of that city, even those of second-hand booksellers. Not a copy of the Scriptures! Everywhere the same answer—*E proibito; non e permesso!* Only in two places was the edition of Martini offered me; but in twenty-four volumes, at the price of 105 francs."‡ And Dr. O'Connor thinks it is a slander that the Church of Rome discounts the circulation of the Scriptures!

One fact more must give. During the past winter, a bookseller, in this city, sent an order for 100 copies of the Douay Bible to Toronto, and then to Montreal, but failed, after the most energetic effort had been made to obtain them, to find in both cities one-third of the number!! Such is the ample supply which Romish booksellers, in Canada, think it necessary to keep on hand to meet the demand for Douay Bibles,—yet Dr. O'Connor regards it as a gross misrepresentation for us to say that the Church of Rome does not wish to see the Bible in the hands of her people!

These facts speak louder than words. The Romish priesthood are "wise in their generation." If the Bible were with them, they would be with the Bible. No dread of "religious vertigo" would keep them from doing what they have never yet ventured to do—give to the people the Bible, as God hath given it, *without note or comment*. The translation must not only receive a Romish colouring, but where that fails to conceal the truth of God, its plain meaning must be perverted by the notes which are appended. And after all these precautions have been taken, the people must be taught that it is a very dangerous book, never to be used without the express sanction of their pastors. The secret of all this dread of the Word of God is not far to seek. *The doctrines of the Church of Rome are not the doctrines of the Bible, and no man ever found them there.*

* Romanism at Home, p. 117.

† Gaussen, p. 515.

‡ H. Seymour's Mornings with the Jesuits, p. 153.

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